

I think it is my duty to say a few words. I sent for Mr. A. De Witt Foster and asked him as to his connection with this matter, and why it was that he permitted himself to act as purchasing agent for the Government of this country. It is only fair that I should give to the House his side of the story, although I am bound to say that it was not satisfactory to me. He said that the county of Kings, N.S., which he represents in this Parliament, largely depends upon the apple crop; that there was no market for apples last autumn and that the people thought there might be some distress; that a great many persons in that county and elsewhere in Nova Scotia had horses which they might sell and that his constituents considered it unfair that horses should be purchased in other parts of the country where conditions were more fortunate than in the Annapolis valley and elsewhere in Nova Scotia, and that they should not be purchased in that province. He said that he went to Col. Neill, the principal veterinary officer, and told him of this, and that Col. Neill informed him that the horses were being provided elsewhere, that no horses could be purchased at that time in the Maritime Provinces; that the matter was very urgent; that horses had to be procured at once; that arrangements had to be made elsewhere and that they had been made elsewhere; and that was an end of it. On the following day, Colonel Neill telephoned him that some 600 horses were not forthcoming under the arrangements previously made, and that he would be very glad to have them purchased in the Lower Provinces; and he asked whether Mr. Foster would see that they were purchased with the least possible delay, and that the matter was urgent and it had to be done at once. Mr. Foster says he embodied the substance of that conversation in a letter which he addressed to Colonel Neill, and the next day he accepted the duties and proceeded to discharge them. So far as Mr. Foster's connection with the matter is concerned, it should be taken into consideration that he is a very young man, altogether inexperienced in business, and that he is not shown to have profited in any way by the transaction. But I am bound to say that his explanation to me of his undertaking the duty and his explanation—if it could be called an explanation—of his failure to supervise in the most careful manner the expenditure of that money and to bring back to the Government an exact account, with vouchers, of